



SOPHISTICATED SUSPENSE

31
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SWAMP THING



THE NEW



**THERE'S NO
STOPPING
US NOW.**

SRKSSSE
J. LEBEN

SWAMP THING

created by LEN WEIN & BERNI WRIGHTSON

I CLOSE
MY EYES...

...AND SHE IS ALIVE...
IN THE PRIVATE NIGHT...
BEHIND MY EYELIDS...

...THE SMELL OF HER SKIN... IN THE
DILUTED... AUTUMN... SUNLIGHT...

...THE FINE WHITE HAIRS...
UPON HER NECK...
UPON HER ARMS...

...AND
THEN...

...I OPEN...

...MY EYES...

...AND ABBY IS STILL DEAD.



BEHIND ME... THE LAUGHTER
OF MY ENEMY... RATTLING IN
ANOTHER MAN'S THROAT...

HIS CREATURES SWARM
ABOUT US... COAGULATING...
FROM THE TAINTED AIR...

HIS
PRESENCE...
CORRUPTS
ITS TIMBERS...

THE WALLS...
ARE SODDEN...
WITH HIS
VILENESS...

TO THINK...
I MOURNED
HIM ONCE
WHEN HE
WAS DEAD...

SHE MUST NOT
REMAIN IN THIS
PLACE.

I STUMBLE
THROUGH HIS
CROOKED HOUSE...
HER COLD, STILL
WEIGHT...
CRUSHED TO
MY BREAST...

"ONE FINAL,
CLUMSY, DESPERATE
WALTZ"... THAT
IS WHAT HE
PROMISED ME...

BENEATH MY FINGERTIPS...
THE BANISTER... BECOMES
A RIB CASE... RAW AND
EXPOSED...

THE BRIMSTONE

SHE MUST
NOT...

...REMAIN...

...IN THIS
PLACE.

NO MATTER HOW
GROTESQUE...

...OUR QUADRILLE
MAY BECOME...

BALLET

TATJANA WOOD COLORIST, * JOHN COSTANZA LETTERER *Presentation*







WAIT!

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?



YOU CAN'T JUST WALK AWAY, HOLLAND. YOU HAVEN'T HEARD THE REST OF IT YET...

YOU SEE, SHE ISN'T JUST DEAD...



SHE'S DAMNED, HOLLAND.

DAMNED TO HELL.



I RIPPED HER SOUL FROM HER AND IT PULSED IN MY HANDS, MILK WHITE AND TRANSLUCENT...

... AND THEN I HURLED IT DOWN INTO THE DEEPEST SEWERS OF THE AFTERWORLD...

... JUST TO HEAR IT SCREAM.



SUCH IS MY POWER... THE POWER TO CONDEMN A STAINLESS INNOCENT TO THE PIT...

THE POWER TO RESURRECT THE GUILTY DEAD AND DRESS THEM IN WARM NEW PROTO-PLASMA...



"YOU MURDERED ME, HOLLAND...
YOU AND KRIPTMANN AND PALE,
COLD ABISAIL, LAUNCHING ME
UPON A FLESHLESS ODYSSEY
THROUGH THE DISMAL WATERS
BEYOND DEATH."

"DARK FLOTSAM
BOBBED UPON
THOSE TIDES..."

"I BROUGHT
SOME BACK
WITH ME."

THE CREAM
OF THE GALLOWES.
THE ARISTOCRACY
OF HELL.

THEY ARE
RETURNED.

THEY ARE
OUT THERE
NOW, CELEBRATING
THEIR NEW SKIN
IN THE
DARKNESS.

"SALLY PARKS, FLIRTING IN HOLMA, TWENTY-TWO
YEARS AFTER A POLICE MARKSMAN MADE A SMALL
HOLE IN HER FOREHEAD, A LARGER ONE AT THE
BACK..."

"AS PRETTY, AS CAPTIVATING,
AS PSYCHOTIC AS EVER."

"AND GUS PRITCHETT, PLUMP AND
FATHERLY, WHO SMOTHERED CHILDREN
IN ABANDONED REFRIGERATORS AND
WENT TO THE ELECTRIC CHAIR IN 1964..."

"AND BETTY MONTCLAIR, WHO KILLED
HERSELF IN A GARAGE AFTER COMMITTING
A CRIME THAT CANNOT EASILY BE PUT
INTO WORDS..."

"AND MARK
NEWELL..."

"...AND ERIC
LOVEDAY..."

THEY ARE
RETURNED,
AND THEY
ARE BUT
THE
FIRST.

IT IS THE
APOCALYPSE...

MY
APOCALYPSE!!

RUN,
HOLLAND!

RUN ENCUMBERED
WITH YOUR STUPID,
POINTLESS
BURDEN...

FOR THERE
IS NO ROCK TO
HIDE YOU...

NO BEACON OF
INCORRUPTIBLE
GOODNESS TO
LIGHT YOUR WAY...

* NO CELESTIAL
FORCE THAT
WATCHES OVER
US. "

MONITOR?
WHAT'S
HAPPENING
IN LOUISIANA?

THE SCREENS
ARE GOING
CRAZY...

MONITOR?

I
SAID...

I HEARD WHAT YOU
SAID. PLEASE DO NOT
DISTURB ME, I AM
CONCENTRATING...

I AM
ATTEMPTING
TO SUPPRESS
FOR THE FIRST
TIME IN MY
LIFE...

...THE
UNCONTROLLABLE
URGE TO LOOK
AWAY.

I MUST NOT...
WEAKEN NOW...

I HAVE MADE... TOO
MANY MISTAKES...
ALREADY...

DREAMS THAT WENT UNQUESTIONED

I SEE MY UNCLE
OVER THERE, TALKING
TO MY HUSBAND. THEY'RE
INSEPARABLE INSECTS,
YOU KNOW...



THE MISTAKES WERE MADE

...YOUR PARENTS FREED THE
MONKEY WITH A CHARM
SPELLED OUT IN RANDOM
LETTERS ON A BOARD.

WAS THERE SOME FURTHER
FIEND THAT NUDGED THEIR ARM?

THE ANSWER,
MADAME, IS FOR
YOU TO KNOW...



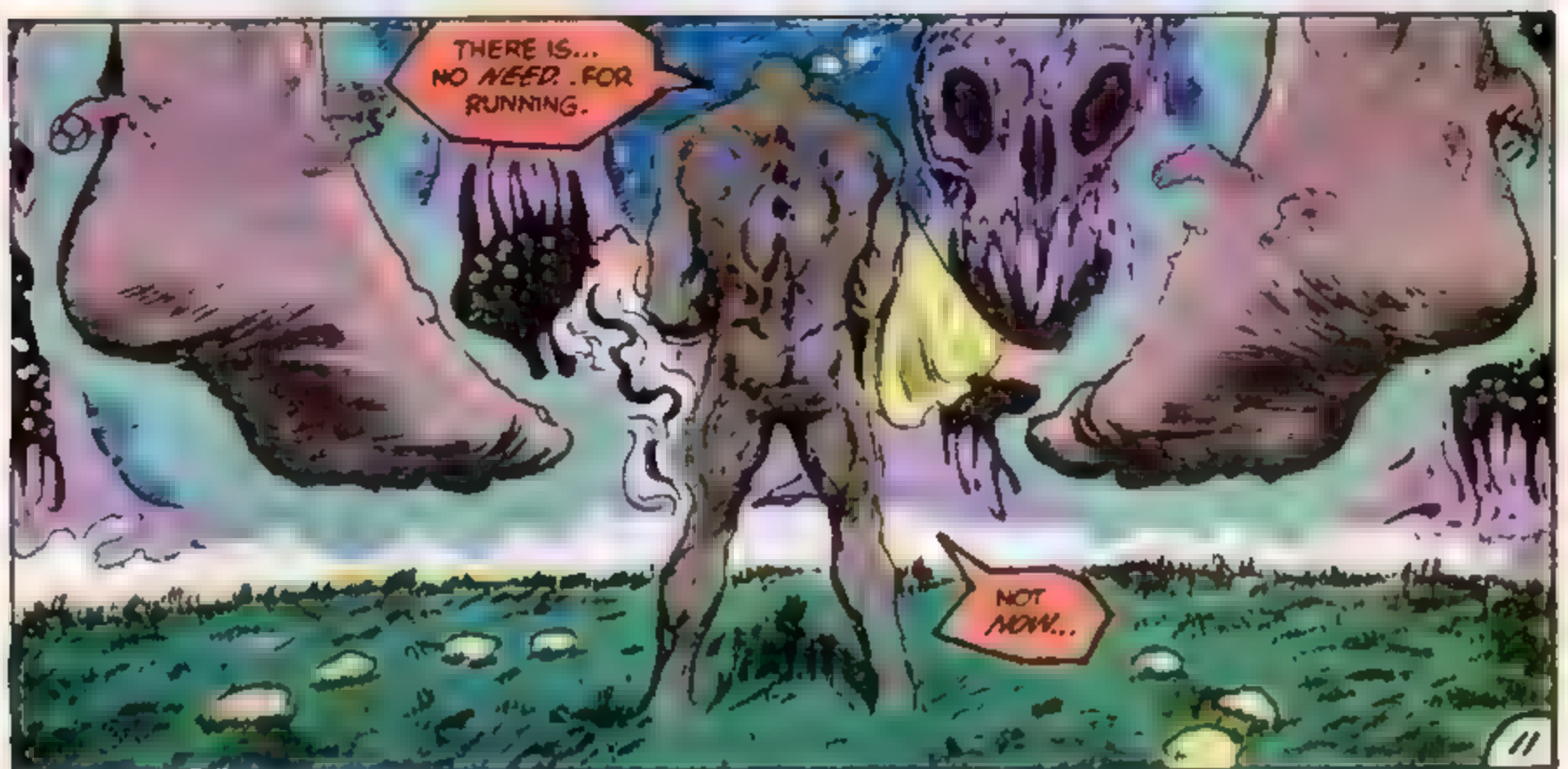
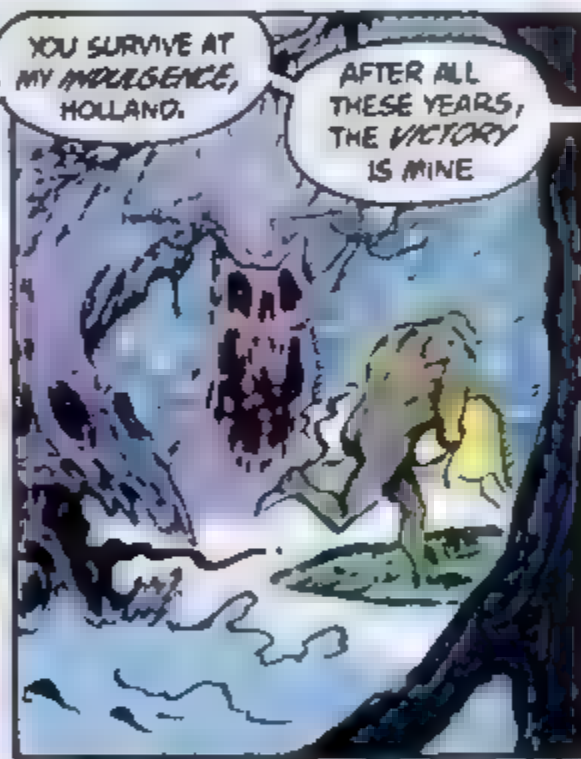
THE OMENS IGNORED



THIS IS
THE FINAL
BATTLE

I MUST NOT
WEAKEN NOW...

10
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE 10 LOWING



DON'T BE RIDICULOUS,
HOLLAND. WHAT ARE
YOU TALKING ABOUT?

YOU... HAVE MADE...
A MISTAKE...
ARCANE.

I... AM NOT...
HOLLAND.

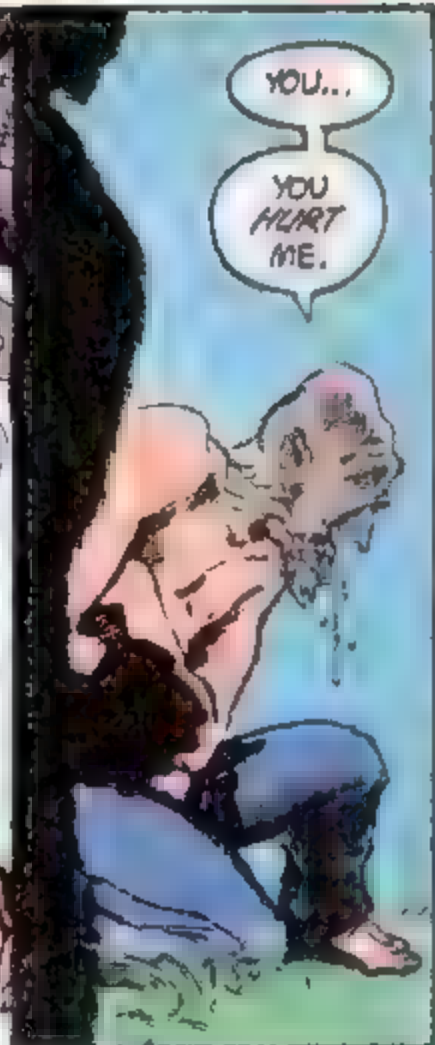
I AM OF...
THE CLEAN
EARTH.

THINGS... HAVE
CHANGED... SINCE
YOU... WERE
DEAD.

I AM...
SWAMP
THING.

I AM IN...
MY PLACE...
OF POWER.

...AND YOU
SHOULD NOT
HAVE **COME**
HERE!



YOU...
YOU HURT
ME.



BUT... YOU
HAVE NO
MAGIC!

SOME
ELEMENTAL
FORCE? BUT...
WHEN I EN-
COUNTERED
YOU BEFORE,
YOU...



NO,
ARCANE...

YOU... HAVE
NEVER...
ENCOUNTERED...
ME BEFORE.

THIS... IS
OUR... FIRST
BATTLE...

THIS... IS
OUR... *FINAL*...
BATTLE...

YOU CLAIM... THE
EARTH... FOR YOUR
OWN... ARCAINE...

YET YOU HAVE NOT...
ONE *TENTH*... OF
THE EARTH'S *POWER*...

YOU...
MOCK...
GOD!

YOU MAKE... THE
WORLD... *WORTHLESS*...
WITH YOUR *LIES*!

HOW...

...DARE...

...YOU??

...AND ON THEIR WAY TO LOUISIANA, THE DARK SOULS THAT HE HAD SUMMONED STOP IN THEIR TRACKS AND STARE, CONFUSED, INTO THE CHURNING WHITENESS...

...AND IN HOUMA, A SAILOR STARTS SCREAMING AND SALLY PARKS DOESN'T KNOW WHY...

...UNTIL BLOOD TRICKLES DOWN HER CHEEK, AND SHE LIFTS HER HAND TO INVESTIGATE...

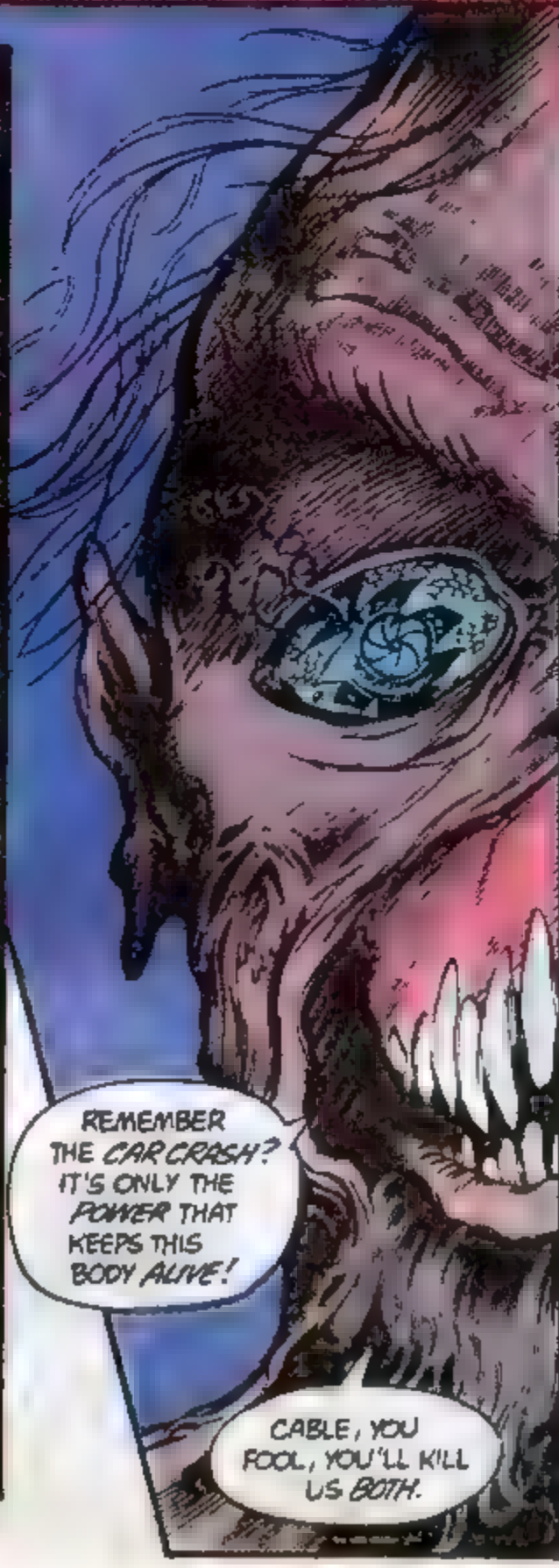
...AND A MILE OUTSIDE TOWN THE PREMISES OF BLACKRIVER RECORPORATIONS BEGIN TO LIQUEFY AND MELT, RELEASING A STENCH LIKE SPOILED MEAT...

BLACKRIVER
RECORPORATIONS

... AND DEEP WITHIN THE BORROWED FLESH OF THE RETURNED MAN...

...SOMETHING STIRS...

NO.





I CLOSE
MY EYES...

I LOOK
AWAY...

BEHIND MY EYELIDS...
IN THE PRIVATE NIGHT...
I HEAR... THE SCREAM
... OF MY ENEMY...

HE IS
FALLING...

HIS UNCLEAN SPIRIT...
TOO DARK... TOO BATTERED
TO RESIST... THAT
TERRIBLE GRAVITY...

AND IN HIS EYES...
THE DREADFUL
KNOWLEDGE...

... THE KNOWLEDGE... OF WHAT
WAITS FOR HIM...

... BELOW...

AND THEN...
HE HAS
GONE...

... AND THERE
IS ONLY...

... MATT?



HELLO...
ALEC...



ARCANE...
HAS GONE?

...BUT YOU...
YOU ARE
HURT...

...THESE WOUNDS
THAT OPEN...

I'M
DYING.

IT'S FOR THE
BEST... AFTER
WHAT I LET
HIM DO...

MATT... HE
POSSESSED YOU...
HIS WAS THE
ONLY WAY...

NO.

NO. I LET
HIM. I WAS
WEAK...

THERE ISN'T ANY
EVIL, ALEC... NO SPECIAL
BLACKNESS RESERVED
FOR DEMONS AND
MONSTERS. THERE'S JUST
WEAKNESS... I HAD A
CHOICE...

MATT... YOU
ARE RAMBLING...

YOUR
POWER...

CAN'T YOU...
REPAIR
YOURSELF?

PERHAPS... ENOUGH
POWER... TO REPAIR
ONE...

BUT I... DON'T
WANT TO... LIVE...

...AND IT
ISN'T ME...
THAT NEEDS...
REPAIRING...



ABBY?

MATT... DO YOU
MEAN... THAT YOU
COULD...?

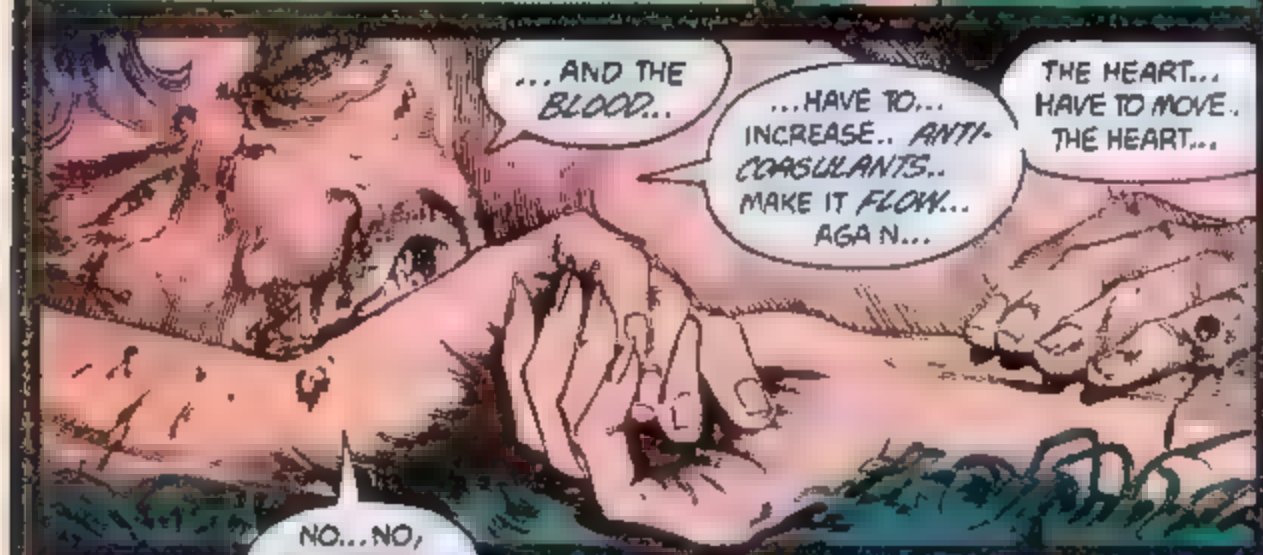
HER
CELLS...

I... DON'T
KNOW...

I... MIGHT...

SOME
DECOMPOSITION...

HAVE TO
REVERSE
IT...

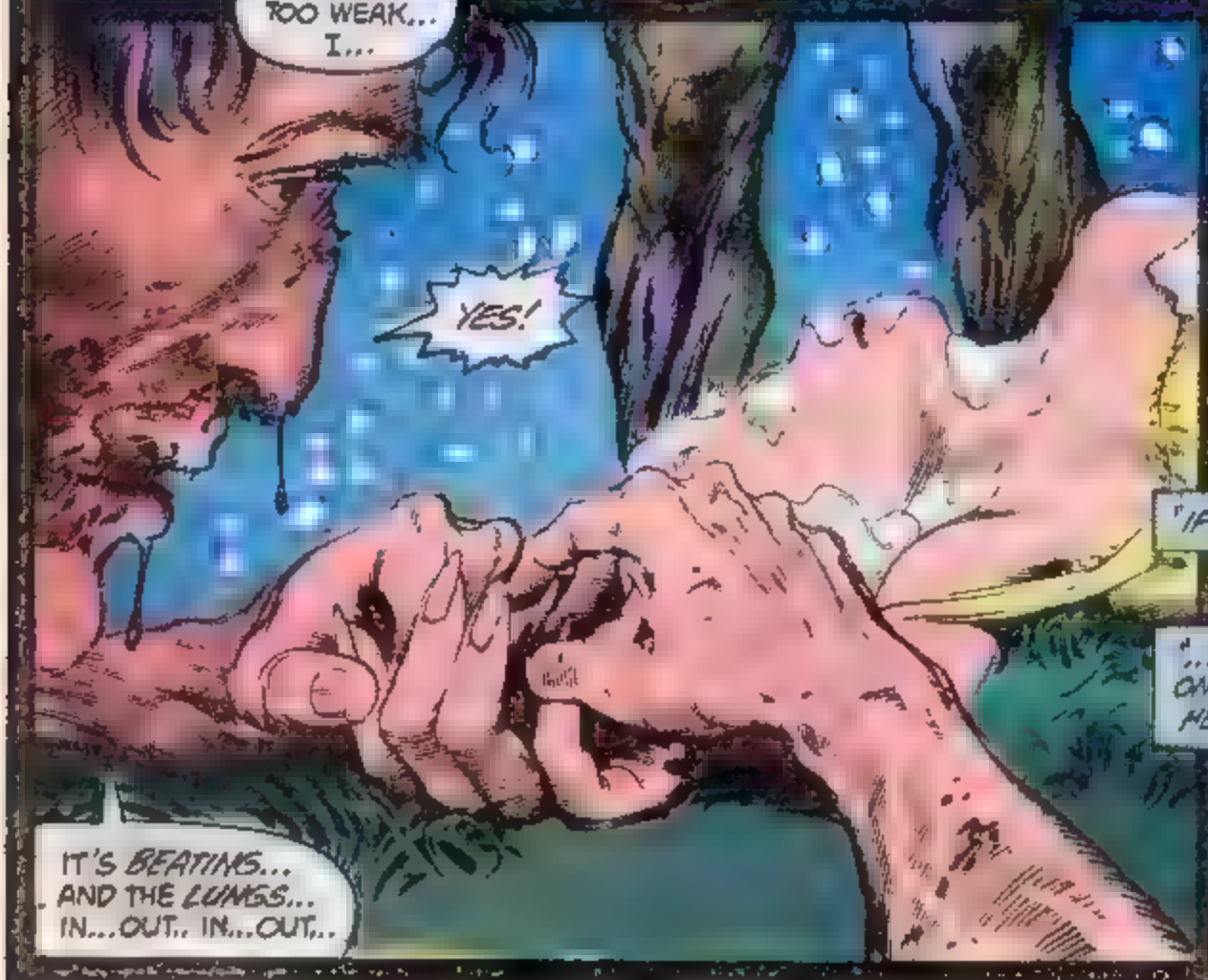


...AND THE
BLOOD...

...HAVE TO...
INCREASE.. ANTI-
COAGULANTS..
MAKE IT FLOW..
AGAIN...

THE HEART...
HAVE TO MOVE..
THE HEART...

NO... NO,
TOO WEAK...
I...



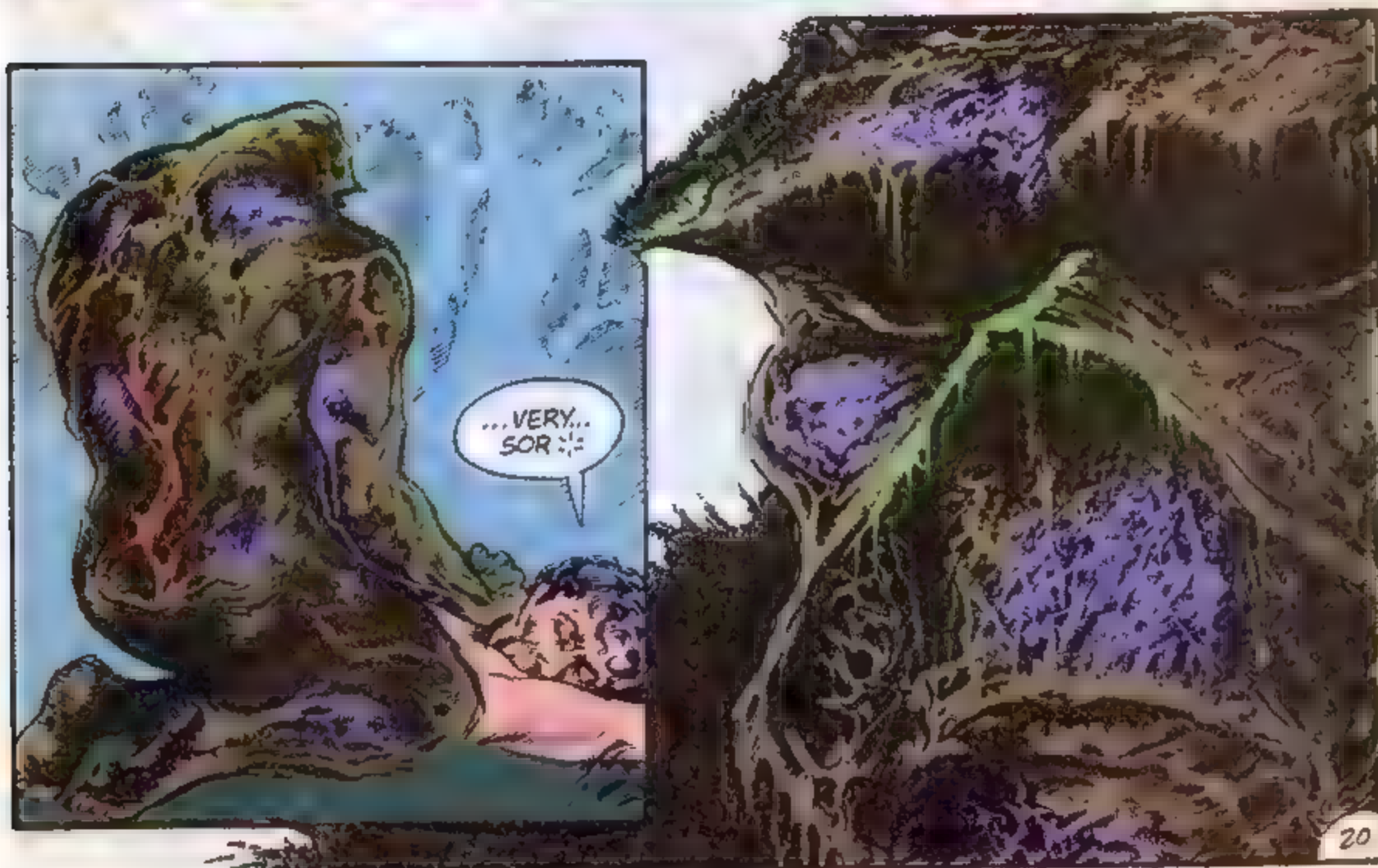
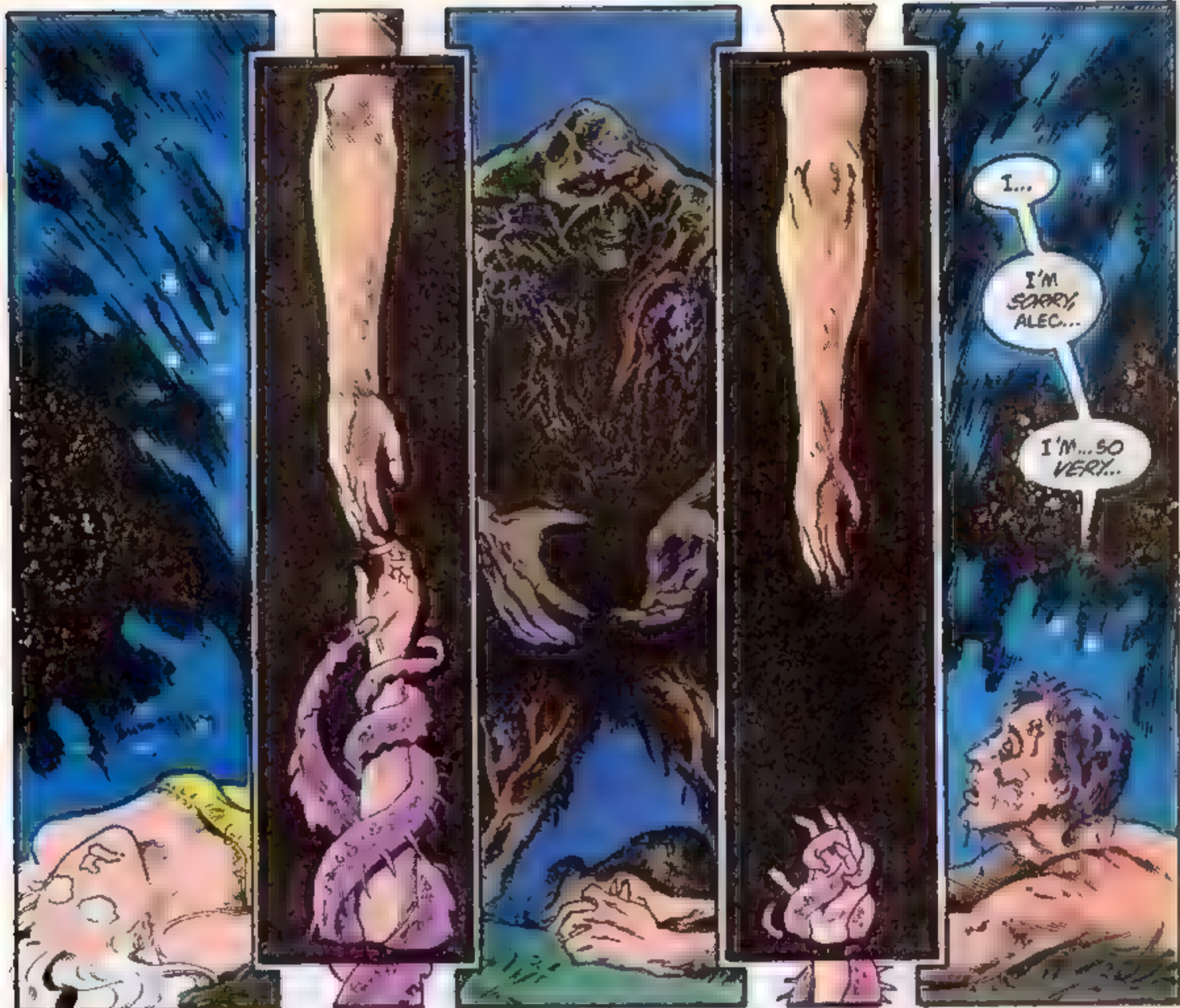
YES!

"IF I CAN ONLY..."

"...IF I CAN
ONLY REACH
HER SOUL..."

IT'S BEATING...
AND THE LUNGS...
IN... OUT, IN... OUT...







NIGHT LIKE THIS, WHO
GIVES A DAMN?

C'MON... LET'S GET HIM
IN OUR CAR. MAYBE WE
CAN GET HIM TO THE
HOSPITAL IN TIME...

YEAH, JEEZ,
LOOK AT ALL
THIS BLOOD...

I ONLY JUST
GOT THROUGH
CLEANIN' IT UP
AFTER THE SAILOR...

VROOOOOOHHHHHH

SHE LIES... WHERE
I LEFT HER...

SHE BREATHES...
HER HEART BEATS...

BUT A HEARTBEAT...
IS NOT A WOMAN...
A BREATH... IS
NOT ABBY...

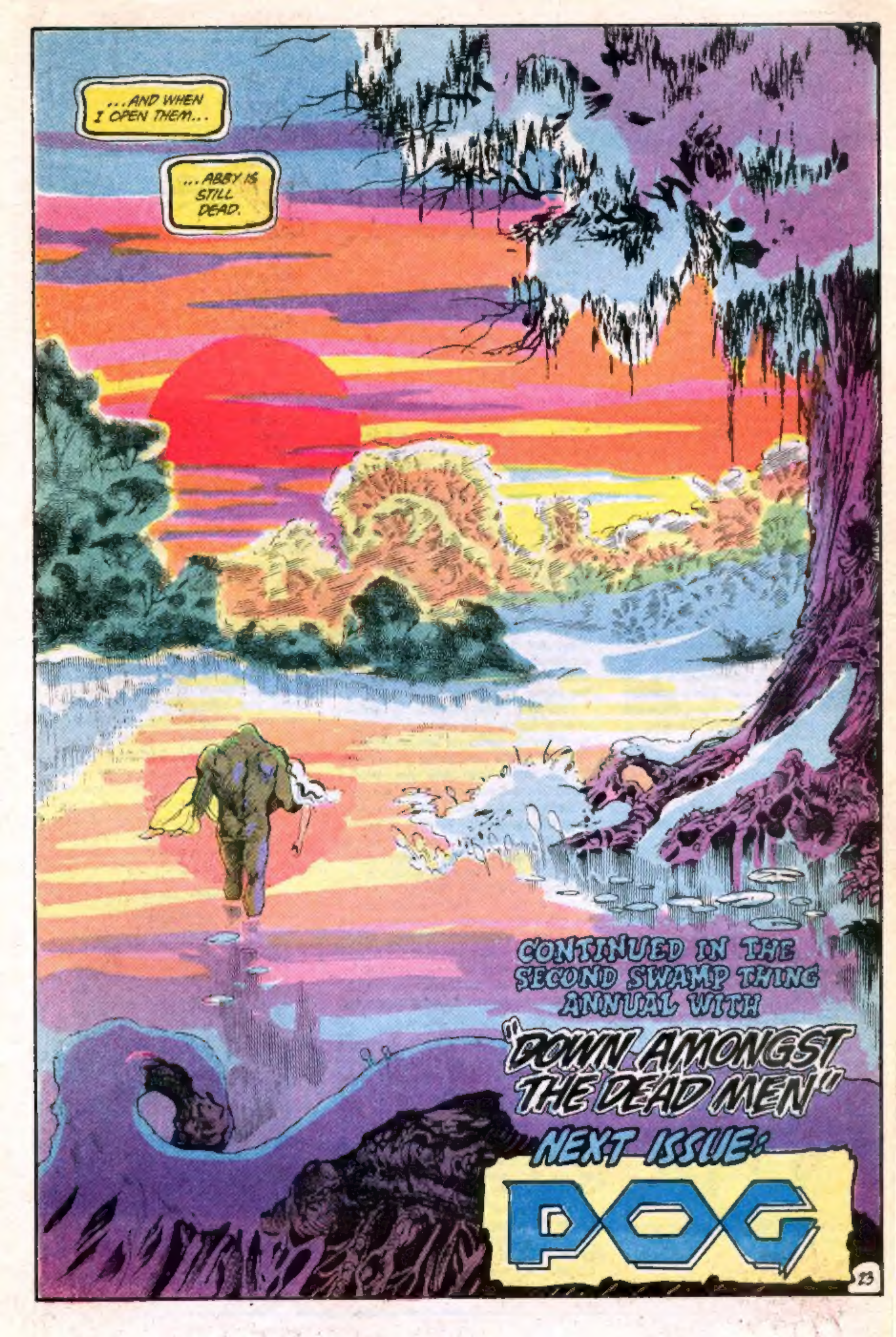
HER BREAST MOVES...

...BUT IT IS
EMPTY.

THERE IS...
NO ONE
THERE.

THE TEARS COME...

I CLOSE
MY EYES...

A full-page illustration of a swampy landscape at sunset. The sky is filled with horizontal bands of orange, red, and purple. A large, bright red sun is partially obscured by a dark, silhouetted tree on the right. In the foreground, a man in a dark suit and a yellow cape walks away from the viewer, leaving a trail of small, circular footprints in the muddy ground. To the right, there is a large, gnarled tree trunk and some purple, fleshy-looking plants. In the background, there are more trees and a body of water reflecting the sunset colors.

...AND WHEN
I OPEN THEM...

...ABBY IS
STILL
DEAD.

CONTINUED IN THE
SECOND SWAMP THING
ANNUAL WITH

"DOWN AMONGST
THE DEAD MEN"

NEXT ISSUE:

POG



DC Comics Inc.
685 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10103

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Arthur Gutowitz, Treasurer

Dear Editor:

On the first page of the SAGA OF THE SWAMP THING #25, Jason Blood says that Harry Price "... will be impaled by a swordfish ... It is written. Selena has already decided not to buy the lawn furniture."

The most enjoyable quality of SWAMP THING lately is that this statement will be explained as the story evolves. Alan Moore weaves a story, with each thread playing its part to advance the story and to determine its outcome. For example, the word "fear" connects the 2-page spread featuring the SWAMP THING (p. 16-17) to page 18, and so on. Thus, the story flows from picture to picture.

And Harry Price is a good example of how a character can be used within the confines of one story, while a continuum can go on from issue to issue. He serves the purpose of introducing Jason Blood's abilities to the reader while presenting an aspect of our times, the hard-sell traveling salesman. It is the point of view of a comic like SWAMP THING that dictates that Harry Price will die, and it harks back to the style of HOUSE OF MYSTERY and UNEXPECTED. The SWAMP THING can take its place as the only remaining DC mystery comic.

And the talent of Alan Moore is making this all happen. Ever since he took over with issue #20, I've enjoyed the SAGA OF THE SWAMP THING more and more. He dissected the Swamp Thing, looked around, and has come up with his conclusions. We are learning more about the Swamp Thing than ever before. We learn that the usually peaceful Swamp Thing will kill based on circumstances that surround him. In fact, in issue #21, it is essential and believable that he does kill.

The layouts and the art try to keep up with the script, and they do a reasonably good job. Stephen Bissette and John Totleben will gain good experience in these pages.

I believe the revival of the SWAMP THING has come full circle. A special comic book deserves special treatment. Thank you, DC.

Timothy Flynn
Rochester, NY

And to that, Timothy, all we have to say is you're welcome.

Dear Karen,

SAGA OF THE SWAMP THING #25, being the first part of a three-issue story, is a little difficult to evaluate. Certainly the first two pages were exceptionally intriguing, even by Alan Moore standards, and the running bit about Selena's lawn furniture and Harry's death at 5:32 was well done. I'm not so sure about the rest.

The scene with Swampy and Abigail was nice, but I found it ironic that directly across from this idyllic page five was an ad for SOTST concerning ST's learning the truth about his origin which read: "... he doesn't like it. He doesn't like it at all." And in both the ad and this issue's cover, it appears that Swampy is attacking Abby! I realize that you are allowed a bit of artistic license, and that "Swamp Thing and Abby—head-to-head in the most exciting conversation of all!" doesn't make exciting cover copy, but I would hope you would coordinate your ad campaigns more closely with the actual happenings in the series, in the future.

I like Matt Cable too much to approve of what Alan's doing with him, so I hope he is either cured (or whatever) or is allowed to die with some measure of dignity intact—soon. And when are we going to see Dennis and Liz again?

As for Paul and the Monkey King, I am a bit confused as to what is going on, although I expect the answers to be forthcoming. However, I definitely do not like the needless slaughter of children on page 23. Granted, this is a horror comic, but this crossed the line for me and I consider it unnecessarily cruel. I will be interested, though, to see if other letterhackers respond negatively to the impending deaths of (at least) six children. As for me, I wish you would exercise more restraint in future stories.

Sincerely,
David Allen
Olney Central College
6 Douglas Drive
Olney, IL 62450

Ads are designed to catch the reader's eye, David, either with a picture, words, or both. Our motive in doing the type of ad we did, was to grab the person unfamiliar with Swamp Thing, and we felt that by putting in a raging anger element, we could spark some people's curiosity. We referred to "The Anatomy Lesson," because that is indeed where the changes in the series started, again

hoping an interested or intrigued reader would pick up the book and possibly the back issues. I do agree, though, that the placement of the ad wasn't the best, but since ad flats are designed well in advance of publication with the same ad appearing on the same page across our line, there was really nothing we could do about it.

To cover your other point, I hope you've realized now that the Demon storyline is over, that the autistic children at Elysium Lawns were not slaughtered by the Kamera, who ain't called the "Nightmare Monkey King" for nothing. He satiates his hunger for fear by feeding off other's horrors and fears, and did so with the children, leaving them unharmed, but definitely scared out of their minds.

Don't forget to join Swamp Thing in his search for Abby's soul as he journeys through Hell in the SOTST Annual on sale in just two short weeks! It's by Alan, Steve, and John and special guest stars will include Deadmen, the Phantom Stranger, the Spectre, and the Demon! And two weeks after that, it's "Pog"—a truly unique and intriguing story that will make you laugh and make you cry. Shawn McManus, who did such a great job on "The Burial," will pinch-hit once again, while Steve and John recuperate from the Annual. Take care, everyone, and we'll see you soon—Karen

